



Peer Pressure, by Aayush Jain

Blue Marble Review Summer Poems July 2020

Editor Noted By Molly Hill

Summer Poems/ July 2020

Dear Readers and Writers,

Thank goodness for summer, because how would/will we bear quarantine in February?

There's a saying that goes something like — *what you put your attention and focus on— will grow*, which is downright cheerful when it applies to something good, but we seem to be awash in challenging, attention-demanding issues that can make day to day coping difficult.

We'd like to offer our 2020 Summer Poetry Issue as form of annotation to your daily life.

While this collection of short poems certainly can't explain what's happening in our world, these student writers look at the world with a keen sense of observation and astute reflection, and we're honored to share their work as both antidote and accompaniment to 2020 summer survival.

While these poems are short enough to be read on your phone during a zoom call, or while standing on that large disk six feet away from the next person in the coffee line, they're long on inspiration, creativity and escapism.

Thanks for reading, and stay motivated*

Molly Hill

Editor

I hope
you hear inside
my voice of sorrow

and that it motivates
you to make
a better tomorrow

Stevie Wonder
1973

- TYCEL NELSON
- CORDALE HANDY
- GEORGE MANN
- ESAK ADEN
- ALFRED ABUKA SANDERS
- FRANK SMART
- PHIL GUINN
- MEKEYA MOODY
- PHUELEE
- DANTE PARKER
- PHILANDO CASTILE
- ERIC GARNER
- TAMIR RICE
- OSCAR GRANT
- SEAN BELL
- BREONNA TAYLOR
- AHMAUD ARBERTY
- TRAYVON MARTIN
- WALTER SCOTT
- TONY MCDADE
- TERENCE CRUTCHER
- RALPH BELL
- MICHAEL BROWN
- GEORGE FLOYD
- CHRISTIAN TAYLOR
- SANDRA A BLAND
- KENDRAC MCDADE
- NAYASHA MCKENNA
- PHILIP GRAY
- RAEPIE GRAY
- AMANI GRAY
- FONG LEE
- SONATHAN FERRELL
- EZELL FORD
- KIMANI GRAY
- WALTER SCOTT
- TONY MCDADE
- TERENCE CRUTCHER
- RALPH BELL
- MICHAEL BROWN

*Image of plywood ART created in Uptown, Minneapolis after the death of George Floyd.

Embracing Change By Katherine Arnold

Dazzling smiles guide my wobbling limbs.
I sense the drug of fame kicking in.
These strangers have formed me into a world phenomenon.
The clothes,
shoes,
and lifestyle scream "Look at Me!"
My gown tingles like silk against my skin.
The fans tremble into a tizzy
when they see the wave I practiced for hours.
The sensation of importance
is embedded into every twist I create.
Sadly, I have to face reality.
My dress transforms back into a raggy blanket.
The screaming audience is only a CD in the background.
The idea of blending in felt
like a gift I could never accept soon enough.
Although now as I look back,
all I desire is to grasp that special appeal again.
The blinding difference that once sent
people running to me is a dream I want to follow.
But maybe chasing that desire
makes me miss what gifts I already possess?

Katherine Arnold is a seventh grader attending St. Patrick School in Rolla, Missouri. She loves education, but also the thrill of kicking a soccer ball. Her English teacher was always there to help smooth out the rough patches of a line or idea. She is very excited to have her first piece published in the Blue Marble Magazine!

My Happy Place By Riley Ball

The soft summer breeze
kisses my cheeks.
The blazing summer sun,
leaves its mark on me.
My skin has turned, from
an orange pale to a creamy brown.
This is my happy place.
Where,
I have to wear a life jacket everywhere.
Where I can lie outside all day long.
I jog over to big red.
Start to climb.
I reach the top
and marvel at the magnificent view.
The boats in the distance rocket past.
Our next-door neighbors are
going down their slide.
My uncle Ross and my dad below me,
yelling at me to jump into the water.
It is a fifteen-foot drop.
My head is queasy,
my legs quake,
my heart pounds.
I take a step, jump.

I feel like I'm flying, as I soar through the air.
Then I hit the water with a big smack.
As I plunge into the murky depths.
The darkness welcomes me.
Then starts to lift me back up.
My life jacket reaches the surface first,
then my head.
I gasp for air.
I open my eyes to my world.
I wish I could stay in this place.
Where the under-sea creatures live peacefully,
Where the water is green,
Where if you dive to deep,
You get seaweed in between your toes.
But like all dreams, I have to wake up.

Riley Ball is going into eighth grade at St. Patrick's Catholic School in Rolla, Missouri. This year in her English class she was introduced to poetry. Her poem *My Happy Place*, was based on her experiences at the Lake of the Ozarks where her family has vacationed since her dad was a baby.

Sunkissed By Katie Li

I watch the crow, all sharp hooks and
Soft lines, circling lazily,
Like a blot of ink highlighted by the glow
Of the sun, writing in a language I'll never
Decipher. I beg it to whisper its secrets
Into my ear, explaining how to be

Less stiff and square, the result of staying
Too grounded.

Paying the wind to carry me,
I flail through the air like the clumsiest
Of clouds, praying I don't fall through
The paper-thin horizon that holds me
Afloat. The sun is delicious and I try
To devour it, glutting myself with
Its decadent glory until I fly
Too close.

Katie Li is a student from Seattle who edits for *Polyphony* and *Kalopsia Lit*. When she's not reading or writing, she likes to dance, study business, and waste money on boba.

Father, Once Son By Divya Maresh

My father's fingers swallow the wood
as they massage chunks of tomato
oozing bubbled blood into the skin
of unpeeled onions, crinkling
like the newspaper he buries his dark
nose into each morning, festooned
with little brown bindis. My father
does not know how to cook anything
save his own body—thick with lassi,
mother's milk, fermented. Cow's breast
blending with thighs of chicken, choked
with cardamom. Animals forget how to walk

when far from home. My father lifts spoon
to mouth and wraps lips around hot metal
marred by the taste of Indian blood. He kisses
the congeries of his memory. Little brown boy
on step stool, bare chest burnt by red sun.
Mother of no daughters grinding nutmeg
against stone, recipes against bone.

Divya Mehrish is a writer from New York. Her work has been longlisted at the UK Poetry Society's National Poetry Competition, and commended by the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award as well as the Scholastic Writing Awards, which named her recipient of five National Gold and Silver Medals. In 2019, she won the Arizona State Poetry Society Contest and the New York Browning Society Poetry Contest. Her work appears in or is forthcoming in PANK, Ricochet Review, Tulane Review, Polyphony Lit, The Battering Ram, The Ephimiliar Journal, Sandcutters, The Kitchen Poet, Fingerprints, Body Without Organs, and Amtrak's magazine The National.

Generation Gap By Jaden Goldfain

My father repeats his question.

"If I told you I wanted to be a woman," he says, his words pressing into me like his fingers

pressed around the kitchen counter edge. "What would you say?"

I know what he's doing. His question is hypothetical. He is Before me, challenging me to stay in his time. He wants me to stay where people have definitions. Standing After me is Their time (Our time?) where definitions are decimated. No ashes remain.

I pick up a blade and slash twice. Once through Before and once through After. I toss the weapon aside.

"Okay," I tell him. "I would say, okay. I would not fight you."

He scoffs. I throw him a rope from where I stand, valleys on either side.

"I would love you."

He doesn't catch it. The valley grows wider.

Jaden Goldfain is a freshman pursuing a B.A. in Writing at Point Loma Nazarene University. She has a passion for writing to expose the things that try to hide and can spend hours in a world of words.

Mistral By Elane Kim

This land has forgotten us. We
reveal ourselves in chipped tooth,
in yellowed counter, in fracture
& fever. This land has buried our
bodies in its soil, but it remembers
the taste of our blood, rains down
acid to dissolve our bones. The air
takes to our lungs like beryllium
to the tongue. This is not our home.
This is siren singing her song & this

is how we lose ourselves. The land still remembers the howling of our voices, thinks of us on windy days. There is psalm hidden in sudden tempest & we have never stopped singing.

Elane Kim is a teenager who loves poetry, chemistry, and just about every kind of bread. She is very passionate about environmental issues, and her writing has been recognized by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. She is very happy to meet you!

Euphemism By Mariana Kovalik Silva

I wonder if I am not me but a version of a girl
crowning herself with a clay bucket,
walking one-hundred miles under the sun
while I wait,
soft-skinned,
for a chance to be thirsty.

It is I who cross my legs,
who draw in the bees with my honey walk.
If mine is the scent of womanhood then tell me,
what is it she wears on every fold of her body
when she bears children, and when her children
grow hungry?

Perhaps I am a euphemism of *woman*,
daughter, *writer*. Somewhere I should be

being born with heavier shoulders and
a thicker spine,
reigning over long dirt roads and
at night telling stories of white men who
came and left uninvited.

Mariana Kovalik Silva is an eighteen-year-old poet born and raised in Curitiba, Brazil. Although her first language is Portuguese, she became fluent in English at age fourteen, and has been writing in English ever since. Mariana writes about finding her voice amidst mental health struggles, and being the first in her family to travel and live abroad. She hopes to use her writing to inspire others on their healing journeys.

Untitled By Avital Balwit

What do you do in the face of cruelty?
Hiroshima — “her skin came off in gloves”
I see the knee on the neck on the asphalt
the indignity, the taste of street, of centuries.
Brutality not my abstraction, but his breath
or lack thereof. The snail shell crushed on
the sidewalk, underneath the giant foot
of my gentle love who walked carelessly
as I do through every conversation, every
impatience, when I cut in line on the day
we evacuated university at the post office
because I believed the line should be organized
otherwise, because I believed myself better,

and I atone — but who's to say he didn't?
Truman, the policeman. But harm is harm
and in a sense we must give up the question
of evil (and not because it is intractable) —
it is irrelevant: we only confront suffering. No
policy solution, no neat conclusion, only the
birdsong, the smell of hot jasmine, heady
in the early summer heat. We are blessed
with imperfect memories, a birdlike darting
attention. Even maimed, we (some, like me,
only spiritually) can only suffer for so long.

Avital Balwit studies political and social thought and cognitive science at the University of Virginia. She writes short stories, personal essays, and poetry. She has been a finalist in essay contests for The New York Times and The Economist, and she won the Atlantic's 2020 instagram poetry contest.

How Does the World End? By Brandon Kim

Like this:

Trees snap wetly beneath the weight of
night falling. Blood orange sun springs citrus
between limbs, bleeding
into smog-filled
skyline: perfume that reads, "Apocalypse."

I see this from the back porch, breathing too-still
air. Each breath lodges like little stones,
rattling with each swallow. Like a pocket watch
stuffed down twisting trachea.

One two. Tick tock.

I gasp – like clockwork.

Asphyxiation is equal to midnight.

We have brought this upon ourselves.

Night falls face first, never gets up again.

Brandon Kim is a rising senior currently attending Culver City High School. An alumnus of the Kenyon Young Writers Workshop, the Iowa Young Writers Studio and the Medill-Northwestern Journalism Institute, he has been awarded in the Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards and Letters about Literature. He is the editor-in-chief of his school newspaper The Centaurian and a reader for Polyphony Lit. He also serves as editor-in-chief for his literary magazine, YAWP, which he co-founded. Brandon is an avid hiker and lives in Culver City with his family.

Unsent Letter to a Lost Friend By Allison Lowe

Far from here, it is July

An ephemeral summer; one in which I gaze at the water tower
and wish my thirst had the strength to scale it

I watched the old man yesterday,
watched him make a church out of himself
in the afternoon's bluing light
He held a gun in his hand like your father used to,
let his eyes glaze over as the Thursday evening ads
droned a cacophony behind him
From my spot in his rose bushes—
two thorns wound into my left thigh,
the smell of pesticide thick—
I listened to the megachurch downtown advertise
a very special Sunday brunch

It reminded me of that one bleary afternoon where we skipped religion class,
when I felt sunsick and you decided you wanted to understand
the devotion of the original faithful,
to understand *how people hollowed out their whole lives for one man*
We tore out a picture of an aging divorce attorney
from my mother's copy of the yellow pages,
taped him on my wall and stared at him
in his faded, jaundiced glory
You told me to imagine we were praying to him and I did
It was springtime, and you were laughing,
and the cherry blossoms were blooming outside
You said that you would never understand religion,
but I said that I understood where it came from

If I would become hollow for anyone,
it would be you

Allison Lowe is a rising high school junior from the San Francisco Bay Area. She has previously been published in Polyphony Lit, Same Faces Collective, and The Loud Journal. She has been recognized by the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and Hollins University.

Ritual By Emma Miao

girls perched bayside shedding
masks onto pebbles. drag fingers,
lick ripple, splash dirty off mishaven
legs. who made night turn to wolf?
who thumbed foam into waves?
they slip, half-cast in shallows,
black manes haloing their bodies.
a mist settles; crested reflections
blur into mosaics. remember
palms pressing waists. remember
sighs dancing on lips. when the
fog lifts, the girls are gone.

F By Maggie Munday Odom

a
bomb

a beat

my mother's face is ashes

tongue
nuclear

words

atomic

rocket launching their way out of me to somewhere like heaven

bitter poison to the angel's ears

remembering

the first quivering night

i said

It into my pillow

felt like God was going to personally shred my ticket to the pearly gates

i am wondering if the Lord was watching all the times my toes got stubbed

my mother prays every time she sees an ambulance

and i curse every time

i hear a voice in my head

maybe it is God

screaming at me from somewhere deep inside my prefrontal cortex

that my tongue is a burning building

and i had better jump off

before

it all goes to hell

Peer Pressure By Aayush Jain



Peer Pressure

Nowadays, with a higher population and more competition to survive and rise in various social ladders, stress, anxiety, and depression are at an all-time high. Many times people cannot tell whether others are experiencing stress. My work consists of two series. The first series is an examination of the different forms stress takes. The dismal depictions of people bring awareness to how big of a toll stress and depression can take on one's life. The second series consists of amber depictions of nature and my childhood. With an inspiring choice of subjects, they provide a sense of nostalgia. This particular piece depicts the reality of academic and competitive stress.(A. Jain)

A Memphis based artist, Aayush Jain, has been sharpening his skills in charcoal and digital illustration in the past few years. As a child, he loved to draw and scribbled on anything he saw. After he picked up a pencil during primary school, his journey started and drawing has shown to be his way of channeling thoughts and perspectives. Through his art (www.aayushjainart.com), he has been able to donate to various non-profit organizations and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The ability to create and make people happy and relieve them of a burden is absolutely the best feeling. His work has been awarded nationally and regionally by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards and has been exhibited at the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Mid-South Delta Fair, West TN Regional Art Center, and more.
